



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April 19, 2005

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DRUG LORD SENTENCED TO THIRTY-FIVE YEAR FEDERAL PRISON TERM

U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that 28-year-old Manuel "Meme" Guardiola was sentenced in Del Rio, Texas, late yesterday afternoon to thirty-five years in federal prison by U.S. District Judge Alia Ludlum for coordinating drug operations for a multi-kilogram cocaine and marijuana importation and distribution operation based in Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico.

"Mr. Guardiola, a big time drug trafficker in Eagle Pass, is paying a high price for bringing his poison into the United States," stated United States Attorney Johnny Sutton.

On June 19, 2003, a federal jury convicted Guardiola of conspiracy to import more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana, conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana, conspiracy to import more than five kilograms of cocaine and conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine.

Between May 1, 2001 and February 26, 2002, Guardiola conspired to import multi-kilogram loads of both cocaine and marijuana into United States in and around Eagle Pass, Texas, from the Republic of Mexico. Testimony revealed that these loads of cocaine and marijuana would then be transported to destination cities including Dallas and Houston, Texas. During this investigation, law enforcement officers seized five loads of cocaine weighing a total of 300 kilograms and three loads of marijuana weighing in excess of 600 kilograms.

This case was investigated by agents with the Drug Enforcement Administration, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the United States Border Patrol. Assistant United States Attorneys Ernest Gonzalez and Daniel Kinnicutt prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.

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